

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-3 and 5-17 under 35 U.S.C. 102 as being fully anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,317,871 (Andrews, et al.). Also, the Examiner objected to Claims 18 and 19 as being dependent from rejected base claims, and the Examiner indicated that claims 18 and 19 would be allowable if appropriately rewritten.

In order to expedite issuance of a patent for the present application, Applicants are herein amending Claims 18 and 19 to put these claims in condition for allowance, and all of the other pending claims – that is, Claims 1-3 and 5-17 – are being cancelled.

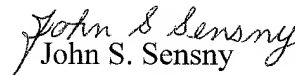
More specifically, both of Claims 18 and 19 were directly dependent from Claim 1, and both of Claims 18 and 19 are being rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of Claim 1. It is believed that this places Claims 18 and 19 in condition for allowance, and the Examiner is asked to reconsider and to withdraw the objection to Claims 18 and 19, and to allow these claims.

Applicants have amended Claims 18 and 19 and cancelled Claims 1-3 and 5-17 from further consideration in this application. Applicants are not conceding in this application that those claims are not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the allowable subject matter noted by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue these and other claims in one or more continuation and/or divisional patent applications.

The present amendment does not raise any new issues, and does not require any further searching by the Examiner. Moreover, this Amendment places the application in condition for allowance. It is thus believed that entry of this Amendment is appropriate, and entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested.

For the reasons advanced above, the Examiner is asked to enter this Amendment, to reconsider and to withdraw the objection to Claims 18 and 19, and to allow these Claims 18 and 19. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicants' Attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,


John S. Sensny
Registration No. 28,757
Attorney for Applicant

Scully, Scott, Murphy & Presser, P.C.
400 Garden City Plaza – Suite 300
Garden City, New York 11530
(516) 742-4343

JSS:jy